

Excerpts from a study on the Economic Impact of the Little (Miami) Trail

The Little Miami Trail is approximately 76 miles long and runs from mid NW Ohio nearly to Cincinnati. In 1999 an economic study of the impact of the trail was commissioned by the Ohio Greenways Initiative. Residents, property owners, business people and realtors were consulted and surveyed by the consultant. The complete study is 34 pages long: I have excerpted some of the key results/responses.

"In recent years, communities, rails-to-trails organizations, and other greenway/bike path groups have been curious about the affects trails have had on the local economy and properties near and adjacent to the trail corridor." This brought about this professional study.

"The residential, business and real estate surveys showed that the trail is considered a valued asset to residential and business interests. Many of those surveyed loved the trail for its beauty, convenience, accessibility and purpose. As an exercise facility, the Little Miami Scenic Trail proves successful and heavily used to improve one's health, even during the 'off season'. A vast amount of people commented on the joy of hearing and watching visitors enjoying the trail. Seeing everyone laughing and talking shows the enjoyment and appreciation of those using the trail."

Economic Findings

Property Values

- No property owners felt that the trail detracted from their property values
- Residents identified no problems related to the trail
- More than half of the respondents felt that the trail had added to their property value
- No residents believed that the trail had decreased their property value
- 84% of respondents felt that living near the trail is better than they had anticipated prior to the construction of the trail
- 88% felt that the trail had improved the quality of life in their neighborhood

Business Survey

- 61% of businesses surveyed said that the trail had increased patronage and revenue in their business
- About half felt that the trail had increased the value of their business property
- 78% expressed no problems associated with the trail

Real Estate

- Virtually all realtors indicated that close proximity to the trail was considered an asset in selling property
- Property on the trail had an increased sales value

Perhaps one of the most important comments in the study was the assertion that this study -- which was highly positive towards all aspects of the trail -- reflected results comparable to those that had been demonstrated in various trail studies across the country and done by a variety of consultants, government entities or academia. In other words, carefully controlled studies by experts almost always showed positive economic results from the construction of a non-motorized trail.

Heart of Michigan Trail

Connecting Mid Michigan Communities



Heart of Michigan Trail Main

Trail Map

Partnerships

Trail Benefits

Property Values

Crime on Trails

Health

Families

Economic

Ingham County Parks Main Page

PROPERTY VALUES

An April 2000 survey of 2,000 recent homebuyers (National Association of Homebuilders and National Association of Realtors) indicated trails were second from the top of the "important to very important" amenity list— behind highway access. According to Gopal Ahluwalia, NAHB Director of Research, trails consistently rank in the top five important amenities in making purchase decisions. (www.nahb.com/news/smartsurvey2002.htm)

Many studies demonstrate the positive role that greenways and trails have on property values. Trails have shown to increase property values, thus increasing local tax revenues. Such increased revenues often offset greenway acquisition costs.

- California's Secretary for the State Resources Agency estimated that \$100 million would be returned to local economies each year from an initial park bond investment of \$330 million (Gilliam, 1980).
- A greenbelt in Boulder, Colorado increased aggregate property values for one neighborhood by \$5.4 million, resulting in \$500,000 additional annual property tax revenues. The tax alone could recover the initial cost of the \$1-5 million greenbelt in three years (Cornell, Lillydahl, and Singel, 1978).
- Omaha (Nebraska) trails are generally perceived by nearby residents as an economic benefit. Almost two-thirds of those surveyed felt the trails would increase the selling price of their home.

Furthermore, "70% of real estate agents use trails as a selling feature when selling homes near trails. 80.5% of them feel the trail would make it easier to sell." (Sjoquist 2003). On Seattle's most popular trail, homeowners with properties near, but not adjacent to the trail, sold for an average of 6% more than comparable property elsewhere. Additionally, the U.S. National Parks Service notes that increases in property values range from 5 to 32% when adjacent to trails and greenways. It is not uncommon in some western U.S. communities to see "Trail Front Property" advertised in the same way "Lake Front Property" is advertised in Michigan.



Navigation

Skip

Economic Impacts of Trails

Hosted by AmericanTrails.org

Business on the trails, economic impact studies, economic benefits, trails and tourism, valuing trails, and other ways that outdoor recreation and greenways contribute to the economy and livability of communities.

Benefits

- The Economic and Social Benefit of Trails in Minnesota
- Economic and Social Benefits of Off-Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities, 1992 (pdf 377kb)
- Economic Benefits of Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation to Arizona
- The Economic Benefits of Trails from Go for Green, Canada (pdf 372kb)
- The Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space
- How land conservation helps communities grow smart
- Economic Benefits of Greenways: Summary of Findings
- The Economic Benefits of Trails (pdf 20kb), from the American Hiking Society
- Economic Value of Walkability (pdf 148kb), Victoria Transport Policy Institute
- How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development (pdf 392kb)
- How cities use parks for community revitalization (pdf 382kb)

Business

- Implementing Trail-Based Economic Development Programs: A Handbook for Iowa Communities
- Economic and other benefits of the Heritage Rail Trail
- Many photos and examples of business along the Longleaf Trace in Mississippi
- How's business on the Katy Trail? Entrepreneurs see opportunities
- Host Towns Agree: Cyclists are a Bonanza
- How Methow Valley grew an economy

Do you find the resources on our website valuable? Then please join American Trails today to support the work we do to keep you on the cutting-edge!

[Join online now!](#)

Studies

- Analysis of Economic Impacts of the Northern Central Rail Trail, Maryland Greenways Commission
- Economic Benefits of the Prairie Spirit Trail (pdf 28 kb)
- Forest Recreation's Growing Impact
- Heritage Rail Trail County Park User Survey and Economic Impact Analysis (pdf 192 kb)
- Little Miami Scenic Trail Economic Study (Word 540 kb)
- Maximizing Economic Benefits from a Rails-to-Trails Project, case study of the Greenbrier River Trail, WV
- Economic Impact Analysis: Trans Canada Trail in Ontario (pdf 1.6 mb)
- Nordic Ski Trail Easements and Property Values
- The National Park Service Resource Book on Economic Values of Greenways, Trails, and River Protection
- Off-Highway Vehicle economic impacts in New Hampshire
- Economic impacts of bike tourism in Colorado
- The Virginia Creeper Trail Economic Impact Analysis
- The Washington & Old Dominion Trail Economic Impact Analysis
- New River State Park trails Economic Impact Analysis

Valuing trails

- A Contingent Trip Model for Estimating Rail-trail Demand, USDA Forest Service, Southern Research Station
- What's a Trail Really Worth? looking at the range of economic impacts
- Trails expenditures shown to reduce health-care costs
- Park Trail Usage Patterns and Public Sentiment Toward Maintenance and Operation Cost of the East Bay Regional Park District Trail System
- Railtrails and special events: community and economic benefits
- Documenting economic and community benefits of trails

Tourism

► For more on training opportunities for trail design, construction, and management, see the [National Trails Training Partnership](#) area.

► **More resources:**

[Bibliography](#)
[Quotations](#)
[Glossary](#)
[Acronyms](#)
[Tools](#)
[Products & services](#)

